Return to Use Initiative
2007 Demonstration Project

Midway Landfill:
Kent, Washington

THE SITE: The Midway Landfill located in Kent, Washington, is a 60-acre former gravel quarry that operated as a municipal solid waste landfill from 1966 to 1983. In all, about three million cubic yards of waste were deposited in the unlined landfill. While the Midway Landfill was created primarily to accept demolition materials, wood waste, and other slowly decomposing materials, other industrial wastes made their way into the facility as well. In 1983, the landfill was covered with silt and fine sands. Then in 1985, combustible gas was detected in structures around the landfill. Beginning in 1992, the City of Seattle constructed a final cap over the site, refined landfill gas control measures, and installed a storm water and drainage control system. The remedial work performed by the City of Seattle at Midway Landfill since 1985 has greatly improved the environmental conditions at the site. Construction of the site's remedy was completed in 2000. Potentially explosive gas has not migrated from the property since 1990. The ground water beneath and down gradient of the landfill is much cleaner than it was in 1985. The Washington Department of Ecology (WDE), which is the lead regulatory agency at the site, is engaged in ongoing monitoring of the gas containment system. Ground water monitoring at the site is also underway and is regularly conducted by WDE.

THE OPPORTUNITY: The City of Seattle and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), which maintain the site, are interested in putting the site to beneficial use. A reuse evaluation and planning study has generated a framework that outlines a range of potential uses for the site. Reuse of the site could provide significant benefits to the growing City of Kent.

THE BARRIERS: Seattle Public Utilities has a fiduciary responsibility to its customers to receive fair market value for the site if it is sold. This could result in a prohibitive price which could make it difficult to find a developer. Engineering studies may also be required to determine the rate of settling on the portions of the site designated for reuse.

THE SOLUTION: Beginning in May 2006, EPA coordinated an eight-month reuse evaluation and planning study that included staff from the City of Seattle and the City of Kent. During this period, EPA and staff from both cities evaluated site conditions and potential barriers to reuse. EPA and staff from the City of Seattle and City of Kent identified the next steps necessary to support future site uses, including the possible need for an engineering study to better understand the site's potential future settlement. The resulting report creates a framework for thinking about a range of potential uses for the site. Coordination between EPA and the City of Seattle will be needed to address regulatory issues, and developing effective institutional controls for the site

Barriers:
Possible engineering problems related to the landfill's settlement rate; high sale price that may deter developers

Solutions:
Study to address engineering questions, development of appropriate institutional controls, delisting of uncontaminated portions of the site

Before:
A vacant site

After:
Possible open space and recreational uses

will be a critical next step in ensuring protection of human health and the environment. Portions of the site that are free of contamination could be considered for a partial deletion from the National Priorities List in order to provide the City of Seattle with an opportunity to transfer these non-contaminated properties at a fair market value, while retaining long-term ownership of the capped area, which could support appropriate recreational uses.

THE SITE NOW: Currently the landfill is capped and fenced. Possible future uses include open space and recreational uses. In the interim, the Washington Department of Transportation is utilizing a portion of the site located in a right of way for an Interstate 5 road widening project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Timothy Brincefield, Region 10 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (206) 553-2100 or brincefield.timothy@epa.gov.